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ABSTRACT

Laboratory training and the Tavistock Conference, two types of experiential learning, contrast in important ways. They are designed to respond to different societal issues and make different types of responses to these issues. Tavistock conferences focus consciously and exclusively on group operation, role, role relationships, intergroup relationships, and total organization. Human relations laboratories (laboratory training) focus at the levels of self, other, relationships in small groups, and group operation. At the same time, both laboratory training and the conference have in common the attempt to provide the learner with direct opportunities for learning from his experience. Both utilize trainers to guide the learning process. Nonetheless, the techniques also differ in that they have different orientations to training clients for conflict. The conference attempts to provide situations that provoke anxiety about behavior and decisionmaking and that allow the members to learn at the rate they want to learn. It relies on organizational structure that is established by the staff on the basis of their authority. The primary emphasis is to study and cope (within the given structure) with conflict that arises out of a simulation of a classically defined bureaucratic authority structure. The concern of the conference is, therefore, for the effectiveness of individuals in given institutional and organizational roles. (Author/WM)

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THE TAVISTOCK GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE: DESCRIPTION AND COMPARISON WITH LABORATORY TRAINING

by

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A CRUSK-ISR WORKING PAPER
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This report was made possible by the author's participation in a Group Relations Conference sponsored by the Washington School of Psychiatry and a Basic Human Relations Laboratory sponsored by National Training Laboratories. Participation in these learning events was made possible by scholarships provided by the Center for Research on Utilization of Scientific Knowledge, the Washington School of Psychiatry, and National Training Laboratories. The author is currently a member of the Educational Change Team at the University of Michigan.

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Introduction

The purpose of this documentary research is twofold. First, it is intended to provide the reader with a succinct description of the Group Relations Conference.[1] Second, it is intended to provide comparisons between the Group Relations Conference originated by the Tavistock institute and the Human Relations Laboratory as developed by the National Training Laboratories.[2] This paper is divided into two sections which follow directly from the twofold purpose of the documentary research. The second section of the paper also provides considerable descriptive material on the Group Relations Conference.

The descriptions and comparisons made here are based both on my direct experience as a participant in these two types of learning programs and on written materials describing and analyzing these two programs. I have attempted to advance broad-scale scientific inquiry into these learning programs by combining the methodology of participant observation with the descriptions and analyses of the same programs by other social scientists. In carrying out this documentary research, I have relied on my own experience to identify areas and dimensions which are central to the two types of training and to make sensitive interpretations of the relevance of what has been written about them. I have proceeded in this way to avoid as much as possible results that reflect the idiosyncracies of my own learning needs and my experiences as a participant.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	1
Part One - DESCRIPTION OF GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE	
Historical Background of Group Relations Conference	3
Description of Conference Activities	3
Part Two - COMPARISON OF THE TWO TYPES OF TRAINING	
Problems of Comparison	10
Goals of Training	11
Experienced-Based Learning	14
Bases of Definition of the Two Types of Training	22
Differences in Underlying Values	23
Implementation of the Two Types of Training	31
Comparison of the Roles of Trainer and Consultant	37
Relationship Between Training and Therapy	42
Research on and Dissemination of Training	48
Problems and Resources Stimulating the Development of Training	50
Conclusion	53

Part One - DESCRIPTION OF GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE

Historical Background of the Group Relations Conference

The roots of this particular type of learning event go back to study groups conducted in England in the mid 1940's.[3] This therapeutic work with groups, using non-directive methods, has been continued to the present by Tavistock Institute. In 1957, Tavistock began the particular operation out of which the present group relations conferences have evolved. Tavistock's first effort to disseminate this form of training conference came through a collaboration with the Adult Education Department of the University of Leicester, England.

In 1965, the first conference of this particular type was held in the United States. It was jointly sponsored by the Tavistock Institute, the Washington School of Psychiatry, and the Department of Psychiatry of Yale University's Sthool of Medicine. The sole sponsor of the conference I attended was the Washington School of Psychiatry, which now sponsors this form of training in the United States.[4]

Description of Conference Activities

An initial way to gain a feeling for the various emphases of the conference is to examine the amount of conference time devoted to different activities. Programmed conference time consisted of 48, one and one-half hour units spread over 14 days. Below is a breakdown as to how this time was allocated between different conference events.

There is a general quality which characterizes these major events. In the design of each event, a great deal of emphasis is put on defining carefully the primary task of the event and the organizational structure necessary to provide a framework for achieving this task. An essential element of this

TABLE I

Activities	Number of sessions of 1 1/2 hours	Percent of total conference time
Study Group	11	22.9%
Large Group	6	12.5
Intergroup Exercise 1	7	31.3
Intergroup Exercise 2	8	
Application Group	8	16.6
Conference Review	2	4.2
Conference Opening	1	2.1
Lectures	5	10.4

structure is the overall conference structure and, in particular, definitions of staff members' authority and responsibility. In the opening session of the conference, the organization is described in terms of the above events, their purposes, and the authority structure of the conference. In the operation of the events, emphasis is placed on the staff members adhering to the primary task and the defined organization.

Throughout these events, special attention is given to three sets of phenomena:

1. Covert processes in and among groups and their effect on group task performance.
2. Functions of leadership (and membership response) toward authority.
3. Processes and events related to the existence or non-existence of defined organizational boundaries within the conference and control of transactions across them.

To describe in more concrete detail the events of the conference, the following description of each of the major events is provided.

Study Groups. These groups consist of 8-12 members and a consultant. The primary task of the group is to provide and utilize an

opportunity to learn about the interpersonal life of a group as it takes place. The consultant's leadership is oriented to this task. In this role, the consultant is not concerned with individual behavior except in so far as it is a clue to, or a manifestation of, the group's operation. To fulfill this role, the consultant controls the boundary of the group. In doing this, he provides security for the members by staying within his own defined role, by starting and stopping group meetings on time, and by maintaining confidentiality outside of the group. Interventions are to be made only when they will illuminate what is happening and, in practice, are quite parsimonious. In the context of this group, the members struggle with keeping to the task, understanding the consultant's role, relating to the consultant, and developing and experiencing various ways the group copes with this task. The study group is the first main conference event and continues to its completion during and after the other 'here and now' events have been completed. The study group itself terminates, however, well before the end of the conference.

Large Group. This group consists of the entire conference membership (55 in the June conference) and several consultants (4 in the June conference). The primary task of the large group is to learn about interpersonal relations in a setting larger than the small group. The consultant's role in this setting is quite similar to his role in the small group except that he is now a member of a team of consultants. The members face some of the same phenomena as in the small group but, in addition, they face conditions of further complexity. The large group's task contrasts with the small group's task in terms

of the constraints on task performance. In the large group, the individual can't readily see all other individuals nor is he as readily recognized by others. At the same time, the individual is faced with many opportunities for interpersonal relations and with numerous rapidly shifting subgroups. In this setting, it is very difficult to establish boundaries and the effect of one's sense of the lack of structure on the individual's sense of reality is acute. These conditions make achievement of the task difficult and, at the same time, they are conducive to strongly expressed primitive impulses. In struggling to organize themselves to carry out the task in this setting, the group demands different qualities of leaders and different patterns of communication than did the small group. Also, the group puts more intense pressures on the consultants. For example, anger is more directly expressed toward the consultants and the level of such overt anger is very high.

Intergroup Exercises. With the beginning of the first intergroup exercise, further complexity is added to the learning situation presented to the members. The primary task of these events is simply to study intergroup behavior. In the most recent conference, there were two intergroup exercises. The main difference between them was that, in the first exercise, the staff of the conference (referred to as "the management" in this context) did not participate as a group, while in the second exercise they did participate as a unit. In both of these exercises, as in other events, clear rules or conditions were established. In the frist exercise, the total membership was informed

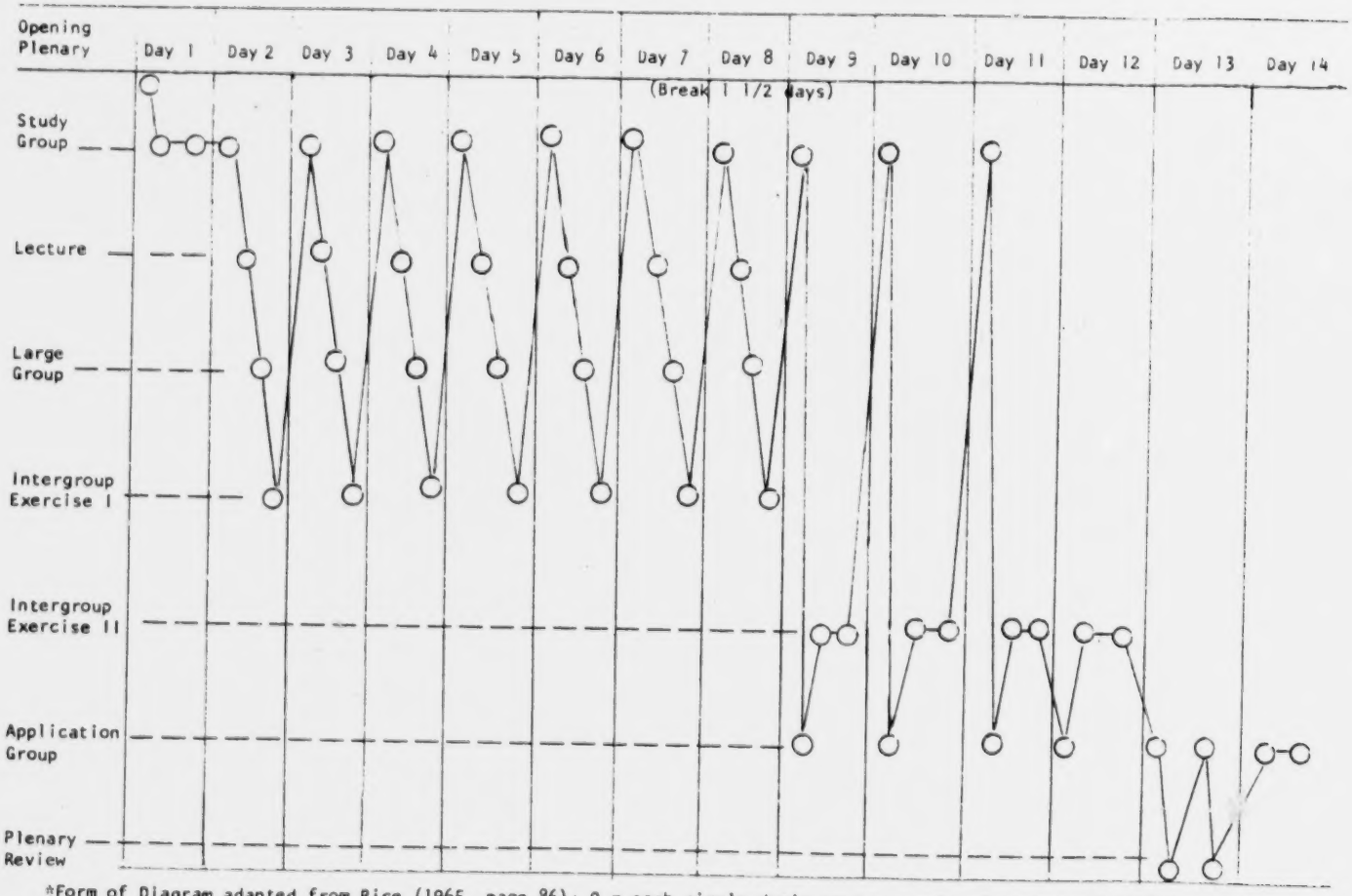
that five rooms were available for the exercise and were given the names of the consultants assigned to these rooms. One room was designated explicitly as a place for intergroup meetings or contacts. In the second exercise, an additional room was added for staff meetings and the members were given a list of consultants who, on request, might be used (in this case consultants were not automatically present in the rooms provided for the exercises). These ground rules, along with the availability of consultants, were the only input structures to the exercise. The role of the consultant was to focus on the 'here and now' behavior of the group in relation to the environment (the remainder of the event). The staff role in the second of these exercises was complicated by the fact that the staff member had both his consultant role and a plenipotentiary role with regard to the conference management.[5] The latter group operated as a team in this exercise.

In these intergroup exercises, the members must learn to deal with the problems involved in political influence, and this new issue, in contrast to other conference events, also requires different patterns of internal group leadership and task organization. Since the second exercise permits the consultants to act as a team, the members have the opportunity to examine, appraise, and relate directly to the conference management as a whole. These exercises usually end with a plenary review session which is intended to bring together data and interpretations from the different groups operating in the exercise.

Application Groups. These small groups consist of a consultant and six to eight members who come from the same work organizations back home. The primary task of this group is to experiment with the application of conference learnings to the members' ongoing work situations. In this effort, two distinct subtasks were involved: (1) the assessment of the utility and relevance of conference learnings, and (2) preparation for the return to the 'real world.' In the most recent conference, the execution of these tasks by different application groups seemed to follow two different models. In one model, phenomena seen by members as confusing or unsetling were explored, conceptualized, and then related to the everyday work situations of the participants. In the second model, case materials related to work situations were the initial focus of attention, and conference learnings were related to these materials. In application groups, the consultant's role is to assist members to relate conference learning to their work environment and vice versa. A part of this role requires aiding the application group to work effectively as a group. Being an expert in the particular type of work of the participants is not seen as a necessary part of the consultant's role.

As a final element in the basic description of this conference, a flow chart of the conference program is provided. This chart provides information as to how the various conference events are ordered and integrated.

FLOW CHART OF CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS



*Form of Diagram adapted from Rice (1965, page 86); O = each circle designates one unit of programmed conference time (1 1/2 hours).

Part Two - COMPARISON OF THE TWO TYPES OF TRAINING

The goal of this section of the report is to provide comparisons between the group relations conference developed by Tavistock Institute described in part one, and the human relations laboratory developed by National Training Laboratories.[6] In this part of the report, several areas of comparison are developed. These areas are denoted by the section headings.

The Problems of Comparison

The comparison of two types of training is a challenging conceptual and experiential task under any circumstances. Often comparisons are done with a very distinct purpose in mind--to test a specific hypothesis or to explain some data. Such an approach to comparison defines one's perspectives toward what is being compared and indicates the dimensions that must be treated. Since I am not attempting to test any hypotheses but rather to provide a broad comparison that might be useful to individuals asking a wide variety of questions about these types of training, I will examine the two training programs from several perspectives. One problem in comparison is the fact that the two types of training imply particular goals and assumptions which are often quite different. Comparing different events often means that extensive inferences must be made in order that a perspective be applied in areas where it does not 'naturally' fit. A further challenge in consistently applying a perspective toward both types of events is to avoid being trapped in either the similar words used to describe different phenomena, or the different terms used to refer to virtually identical phenomena.[7] In attempting to do this, it also will be necessary to attempt to keep one's subjective experience of the two events in focus. This is difficult for me because I experienced the two training programs with different degrees of personal maturity and conceptual sophistication.

I have tried to avoid any overly simplified labeling which would designate one or the other type of training, or parts of the training, as good or bad. The real issues, as is apparent to those who have concerned themselves with this evaluative problem, are: training for what, under what sort of contract, and with what values with respect to change. Those who are interested in comparisons of different types of training inevitably take different positions on these key issues and often change their positions in the face of different situations. The comparisons in this report are intended to provide useful material to individuals who have positions on these issues and who desire to arrive at conclusions about the relevance, usefulness, or applicability of various forms of training. It is hoped that this material will be useful both to those with a theoretical-research orientation to training and those interested in its application for social change.

Goals of Training

One way to begin making general comparisons between different types of experience-based learning events is to place them on dimensions designed to differentiate the goals of the events. In attempting to describe systematically the goals of different varieties of laboratory training, Schein and Bennis (1965, pp. 58-63) have developed a number of dimensions for classifying laboratory goals. Two of these dimensions are of interest in this section: "what is the learning about" and "what is the level of learning." The major categories of "what the learning is about" are self, others, relationships in small groups, role, role relationships, intergroup relationships, and total organization. For the purposes of our comparisons here, one added category is needed: "group operation," which falls between "relationships in small groups"

and "role" as a level of analysis.[8] The categories within the dimension of "level of learning" include awareness, changed attitudes, and increased competence.

Different laboratory training events in the NTL tradition have goals which coincide with all categories and combinations of categories within the dimension "what the learning is about." In general, however, it can be said that NTL human relations laboratories focus at the levels of self, other, relationships in small groups, and group operation. Even with the particular laboratories which operate under this name, there is a good deal of variance as to particular goals. There is variation as to whether the group or individual end of this attenuated continuum gets primary attention, but seldom do these laboratories focus on role, role relationships, intergroup relationships, and the total organization. It has been pointed out (Harrison, 1967, p. 5) that, over time, there has been a tendency in laboratory training to place less focus on the decision-making group and a greater emphasis on individual growth. By contrast, conferences in the Tavistock tradition focus consciously and exclusively on the categories of group operation, role, role relationships, intergroup relationships, and total organization.

On the dimension of "level of learning" there also is a difference between the NTL laboratory training and Tavistock conferences. Laboratory training encourages all three categories of this dimension as its goals but, in particular, emphasizes increased competence through behavioral change. Conferences, by contrast, focus on awareness and less on the other two categories. The conference tradition seems to assume that this is the key aspect of learning and one that potentially can be achieved in an experienced-based training event of the type designed. If asked about this focus, conference

leaders probably would say that awareness and understanding are the central aspects in learning and that behavior change easily follows fairly directly from this. If behavior change doesn't follow easily, it probably involves the type of change that must be worked at over a longer period of time in the individual's day-to-day situation.

Documentation of the differences on the two dimensions discussed can be obtained by a careful comparative reading of the brochures which the two types of training use for advertisement. A typical brochure for an NTL human relations laboratory states:

> Human relations training focuses on the individual, the small group, and the organization. A major training goal is increased interpersonal competence in the roles each participant plays--on the job, in the community, even in the family. The objectives include both the individual satisfactions derived from the full use of one's capacities and the organizational strength achieved through good working relations. The training activities of the laboratory combine to make it possible to experiment with more effective ways of learning and new ways of behaving (Schein and Bennis, 1965, p. 11).

The following is taken from a recent conference brochure:

> The purpose of the conference is to provide the members with opportunities for increasing awareness and understanding of intra-and inter-group processes. Greater effectiveness of task groups and greater satisfaction for those engaged in task performance are clearly socially desirable goals.... Understanding, insight, and the ability to use theoretical knowledge are more likely to take place if learning is based on direct experience. The Conference attempts to provide a setting in which experience can be studied and at least partially understood as it occurs. The emphasis in the Conference is upon learning which is felt as an experience and which is translatable into action in work and community settings (Washington School of Psychiatry, 1968, p. 2).

These excerpts have been included to give a better sense of the differences that were described in terms of the two analytic dimensions.

Before leaving comparison on the dimension "what the learning is about," it is useful to consider the placement on this dimension of other experience-

based learning events. A number of learning events which are currently getting a great deal of attention are those concerned with the enhancement of "human potential" (Life Magazine, July 12, 1968, p. 48ff). Included in this group are events sponsored by Esalen on the West Coast and by Orison in Washington and elsewhere in the East. Like NTL, Esalen sponsors a wide variety of different learning events but, in general, Esalen's outcome goals focus on the "self."[9] Another type of learning event which shares the same focus on self is the recently developed Creative Risk-Taking Laboratories (Bird, 1967). These types of training will not be further referred to in this paper because of their wide departure in goals and techniques from the Tavistock conference of general laboratory training which is the focus of this report. However, it would further our systematic knowledge of experience-based learning to have a sensitive and detailed comparison of these types of training.

Experience-Based Learning

Both laboratory training (in the NTL tradition) and the conference (in the tradition of Tavistock Institute) operate with the premise that maximum learning and the best use of knowledge in the areas focused on by the training require direct experience. Both forms of training are designed to provide opportunities for this experiential learning and practice. In this section, similarities and differences in the qualities of experiential learning will be described. Also, differences in assumptions about the learner, the place of cognitive input, and the role of skill development will be described.

The similarities and differences in the qualities of experience of the delegates to the two events can be detected by examining the opening hours

of the respective events. Participants in both, on the basis of advance brochures, are informed that learning is based on experiencing the phenomena to be learned about and, at the same time, taking part in creating the phenomena to be learned from. From what has been written, my own observations, and my own experience, it is evident that the delegates arrive at the opening sessions of the two training events in much the same psychological state. Delegates enter the first session having made initial attempts since arrival to clarify their expectations with other delegates. They are anxious and have difficulty comprehending what is said to them in the opening session. Both types of training events typically start with a short orientation session for all members and staff of the events. In both types of training, this opening session is followed by a small group meeting, either a study group or a T-group.

What is said in the opening session gives clues as to how the two types of training will emphasize different aspects of the participant's experiences. Schein and Bennis (1965, p. 13) provide a description of the typical opening session of a human relations laboratory in terms that were accurate with respect to my own experience. The dean of the laboratory explains that the goal of the training is to provide opportunities for the delegate to learn about self, others, groups, larger systems, and the learning process. He also stresses how the method of the laboratory (learn from analysis of one's own experience) differs from the traditional learning experience. The dean also explains the daily schedule and makes any necessary administrative announcements. In this session, the dean and laboratory staff, as well as most members, are attired in casual dress. An attempt is made to start the session on time, but there is no emphasis on starting at precisely the designated hour.

The opening session of the Tavistock conference is characterized by more formality and important differences in content. The full staff, men attired in suits and ties and ladies in dresses, sit in a line across the front of the room. The climate of this session and the conference can be felt in Rioch's (undated) description of the conference style:

> The style of the conference is disciplined and austere. The message which this style is intended to convey is the seriousness of the undertaking, the single-mindedness with which the staff is prepared to devote itself to the task which it has set itself, the recognition of the difficulties inherent in its task, and its intention not to look aside from any conflicts which occur (p. 3).

There is a noticeable effort to begin the session precisely at the designated hour. Advance information received by the delegates emphasized the starting time and urged early arrival so that one could be unpacked, etc., prior to the first session. The director begins by giving the names of the staff and making a few administrative announcements. He then describes the training as a learning opportunity in which experience plays the primary part. He states that the important experiences will arise from situations constructed in such a way that some factors of everyday life are eliminated and others controlled in order to examine the underlying processes. The examination will check feelings and fantasies against reality and will often involve checking between staff and students, groups which often have different perspectives. He states that learning in part would be about anxiety, fear, and stress. After outlining the learning opportunities, he briefly describes each conference event in terms of its primary learning focus, its place in the overall sequence of scheduled sessions, and the location in which it will take place. The final part of this opening session focuses on the organization of the conference. The director describes the source of the director's

and staff's authority and the responsibility that goes along with their respective authority. He stresses that scheduled sessions will begin at their printed times. He explains that separate "common rooms" (rooms for informal socializing) are available for staff and for members. The reasons given for this separation are that, at times, each will want to feel free to discuss the other. There is also a common social area available near the bar. He closes by saying that an opportunity for learning is provided and the question of how quickly it will be used is up to the individual.

Both orientation sessions focus on the nature of the learning and the fact that it involves experience. In the Tavistock session it is made clear that learnings will involve checking fantasies against reality and that learnings will involve anxiety, hostility, etc. In this part of the introduction, the more psychoanalytic orientation to individual behavior and experience is evident. The Tavistock opening also emphasizes the task structure and the authority structure; staff roles are explicitly related to these structures. This indicates the organizational focus of this type of training, and that the learning is intended to be about groups and group behavior. With this introduction of structural realities, it is clear that they are conference givens. It is also clear that, apart from these givens, the delegate is autonomous and has responsibility for his own acts and his own learnings.[10]

The two types of training differ in their model of the learner and their understanding of the learning process. The dominant model of the individual learner in the Tavistock conference is the psychoanalytic model. Given the acceptance of this model, the most apparent contrast with laboratory training is with respect to assumptions about the role of the unconscious. The central conference role given to the unconscious is demonstrated in a statement made by Rice:

> The assumption that is made throughout the book is that individual behavior is affected by unconscious forces, and, as a corollary, that individuals and group of individuals always behave in ways that are not wholly explicable in terms of their rational and overt intentions. It is also assumed that, in any group or institution, unconscious motives affect the decisions that are taken; that any committee meeting, for example, has both a written and an unwritten agenda and it is the unwritten agenda that takes up much of the time; and that jealousies, guilt, anxiety, and undisclosed and often unrecognized struggles for power have a profound effect on the acceptance or rejection of solutions to apparently straight forward problems (1965, p. 9).

Because of this position, closer attention is paid in the conference to the influence of unconscious or suppressed factors upon overt behavior. As one participates, one becomes aware of this vantage point in the consultant's continual attention to suppressed hostility and the influence of unconscious defenses in authority relationships.

Certainly, the noticeable dominance of the psychoanalytic orientation was heightened in the conference I attended by the large proportion of the client population which came from the mental health professions. But even aside from the influence of this particular population, the learner's experience is conceptualized in terms of psychoanalytic theory. Theory inputs on what is happening in the study group represent extensions of Bion's psychoanalytically-based conception of groups. Some of Melanie Klein's interpretations of object relations are presented as they relate to what occurs to individuals in the large group. This orientation is not limited to theory inputs; it is closely reflected in consultant interventions in the group sessions.

In the context of the conference itself, there is little stress on conceptualizing the learning process. The conference assumptions about this process are well presented by Rice:

> ...much of the learning takes place at the unconscious and experimental level. Learning also takes place in post conference and in intuitive recognition of similar experiences in other situations at other times (p. 27). The process of learning is a process of 'internalization,' or incorporating felt experience into the inner world of fantasy and reason. The individual has the right to determine how quickly this process should go. He will resist learning if the process makes him anxious or frightened or if the rewards are insufficient. But successful learning and resistance are cumulative, and learning can be a part of a readiness for change that is inherent in any growing and maturing organism (1965, pp. 24-25).

These statements by Rice follow in a consistent fashion from the conference's psychoanalytically-based model of the learner.

In laboratory training and in theories about it, there is a greater concern about the learning process as a conscious and articulated process. This is most apparent in laboratory's training's stress on "learning how to learn." As Bradford, Benne, and Lippitt (pp. 22-36) point out, this understanding of the learning process is drawn from many sources ("formal schooling and related learning theory," "psychiatry and counseling," etc.). The contrast to the Tavistock conference's assumptions is evident when these authors specify the contribution of psychiatry, counseling, and personality theory to the understanding of the learning process in laboratory training. They point to the phenomena of resistance to new learning and relationships as a central factor in learning. There is no mention of the unconscious, defenses, etc. Laboratory training's model of the learner is evident in its efforts to deal with the learner's conscious intents and the discrepancies between these intents and results brought about by behavior. This type of training focuses on consciously modifiable elements of behavior and places a heavy reliance on the efficacy of verbal feedback. Within the tradition of laboratory

training, effort is being made to conceptualize more clearly and completely the individual learning process that occurs in the laboratory. This effort is reflected in the work of Schein and Bennis (1965, pp. 271-276, pp. 255-310) and Miles (1957, 1960). The influence of the positivistic social sciences, the education profession, and the relatively strong focus on individual learning in the tradition of Lewinian social psychology have brought about laboratory training's attention to the learning process as well as this particular model of the learner.

Accompanying this difference in perspective on the learner and the learning process are differences in emphasis with respect to cognitive inputs and skill practices. Laboratory training has consistently made a case for the importance of cognitive input in better equipping the learner to understand what is occurring and in applying his learnings in other situations. Despite this general emphasis, in the design of laboratory training events there is often a great deal of difference of opinion about the importance of cognitive input, its maximally useful form, and its placement in the schedule.

In the past, the Tavistock conference has always had a lecture series as one of the scheduled conference events. Its place in the conference and what it achieves has raised contention among the staff; in fact, there seems to be a growing mood to do away with the lectures entirely. The form of these lectures has generally been a one hour lecture to the full membership of the laboratory followed by a short question-and-answer period. In the most recent conference, these lectures were largely read by the presentors. The combination of their length, complexity, mode of presentation,

and the lack of availability of transcribed versions was a source of frustration to the delegates. There seemed to be little inclination on the part of the staff to think about ways of experimenting with the presentation of cognitive input, nor with ways of researching its actual usefulness.

The skill practices in laboratory training have no parallel in the Tavistock conference. These skill practices typically included observation exercises, practicing different forms of helping behavior, assuming particular roles in problem situations, etc. In my estimation, this difference arises from several features of the Tavistock conference. In the first place, the conference does not focus on learning about the self. Moreover, the conception of the individual employed as a psychoanalytic one. In this frame of reference, social learning of the kind worked on in laboratory training skill practices has a less central place. Since the conference does not focus on changes in individual behavior, there is no emphasis on giving and receiving feedback that would support behavioral experimentation and changes.[11] The primary goal of the conference, as it is conceptualized with respect to the individual, is insight and understanding of group and intergroup behavior. The outcomes of insight and understanding are supposed to be brought about in situations which allow for very free interaction, including opportunities to attempt new behavior. The amount of prestructuring in the conferences is minimal (e.g., the conference intergroup exercise as compared to a typical laboratory intergroup exercise is very low in structure) and therefore the resulting phenomena and the individual learning experience is complex.

Bases of Definition of the Two Types of Training

Basic to the definition of laboratory training is extensive philosophy of learning which includes an explicit value system. The design and operation of a particular training event in this tradition is based on this philosophy. The basis of definition of conference training in the Tavistock tradition is a particular organizational design with its attendant roles, authority structure, boundaries, etc., a cluster of interrelated, highly specified primary tasks, and a value position concerning human behavior in organizations and groups. These conference tasks are basic to providing the learner with the experience of certain key phenomena. A full analysis of the implications of this contrast will illuminate many of the basic differences between them.

Before making such an analysis, one implication of this contrast is apparent. The difference between the two training programs with respect to their bases of definition partially accounts for the relatively greater heterogeneity of events which come under the designation of laboratory training.[12] By contrast, within the Tavistock tradition there is a quite homogeneous quality to the training events. A full explanation of this difference with respect to heterogeneity of training events would also require a comparison of the underlying orientations to experimentation and dissemination of the two kinds of training as well as their histories of development.

The fact that the basis of definition of laboratory training is a particular philosophy of learning (and its attendant value system) does not mean that this kind of training lacks particular organizational patterns and particular task configurations. By the same token, training in the Tavistock

tradition, while not defined from the same perspective as laboratory training, has an implicit and to some degree explicit philosophy of learning and an attendant value system.[13] The differing perspectives in the definition of these two types of training means that a clear comparison must be teased out by bringing to bear the perspective of one of the particular definition of the other. To accomplish this, I will work from NTL's (i.e., laboratory training's) definition of its value system and bring to bear the Tavistock tradition's perspective on these values.

Differences in Underlying Values

The role of values in laboratory training is succinctly stated by Bradford, Gibb, and Benne:

> The training laboratory was thus designed to increase intelligent commitment to three sets of values beleagured and inadequately utilized in contemporary society. These are the values associated with the social and behavioral sciences, with democracy, and with the building of the helping relationship among people. It was these values seen in interrelationship, that the laboratory innovators believed were best calculated to guide efforts to meet the unmet learning needs of a changing, industrialized society. And these values have continued to guide laboratory training during the seventeen years of its development (1964, p. 12).

Although Schein and Bennis (1965, pp. 30-35) organize the values in question differently and at greater length, they are in substantial agreement with the above statement. According to them, the values of science that are involved are the "spirit of inquiry... expanded consciousness and choice... [and] ... authenticity in interpersonal relations." The values of democracy which undergird laboratory training are those of "collaboration" and "conflict resolution through rational means."

The Tavistock conference is built on the commitment that in order to live and work, and particularly to lead in organizations, it is important to learn about particular phenomena (described in the first section of this report). While not having as completely ordered and articulated set of values, the conference does have certain explicit values which underly the presentation of these phenomena for learning purposes. Rioch has stated some of these values:

> A major value to which the leadership is committed is ruthless honesty in thinking about oneself and one's group without any assumption that such honesty will necessarily lead to smooth resolution of conflict. Thought, intellect, and rationality are highly valued, as are clear and firm decisions made in the service of a stated goal....
>
> There is recognition on the part of the leadership of the Conferences that human beings readily, all too readily, form groups, that they form mobs which lynch, groups which glorify fanatical leaders, groups which easily slip into orgiastic experiences or into the warm glow of togetherness. On the other hand, the formation of a human group seriously and consistently dedicated to a serious task, without fanaticism or illusion, is an extremely difficult process and a relatively rare occurrence...: One of the major aims of the Conferences is to contribute to people's ability to form serious work groups committed to the performance of clearly defined tasks. Whether or not members of such groups feel friendliness, warmth, closeness, competitiveness, or hostility to each other is of secondary importance. It is assumed that these and other feelings will occur from time to time, but this is not the issue. The issue is the common goal to which each individual makes his own differentiated contribution (undated, pp. 4-5).

There is a further value of the conference in recognizing underlying conditions of different styles of group operation and leadership and inherent dangers in each of these styles.[14]

From the perspective of the Tavistock conference, certain of the values of laboratory training inhibit or lead to inappropriate learning

in the conference setting.[15] Also from this perspective, certain of the guiding values of laboratory training lead to inappropriate personal and transitory solutions of "there and then" problems, i.e., societal and organizational problems. In a later section, I will describe the difference between the focus and conclusions regarding societal problems of these two types of training. In this section, there remains the task of delineating from the Tavistock perspective particularly critiques of the guiding values of laboratory training.

One of the guiding values (a part of its valuation of democracy) of laboratory training is collaboration. In so far as possible, the traditional authoritarian student-teacher relationship is minimized and participation, involvement, and self control of the delegate is emphasized. The staff works toward a relationship of trust and confidence with the delegate. The interdependence of staff and delegate in the learning process is emphasized and, as the laboratory proceeds, more joint planning by delegates and staff is undertaken.

From the conference perspective, several things are wrong with this promotion of collaboration as an input value to the experiential learning event. A training event operating with this value tends not to lead the learners to inquire about what are the antecedents of collaboration, e.g., what does it really mean, under what conditions does it arise, what needs does it satisfy, etc. The implementation of this value tends to put peer relations and quasi-peer relations, as well as the feelings of warmth and openness or hostility and defense (which tend to grow out of collaboration), ahead of learning about authority relations. It is this learning context that

is central for the conference. It is committed to helping human groups achieve the task designated; to attain the conference's purpose precludes an institutionalization of the shared decision-making style which laboratory training attempts to develop. A key part of the conference organization is the assumption of the legitimized authority and expertise of the consultants.[16] The power of the consultant which arises from this source, and the responsibility that goes with it, remains in place throughout the conference. While this precludes shared decision-making, it does not preclude staff-delegate informality and friendship outside of these activities.[17]

One of the values of science which guides laboratory training is the "spirit of inquiry." This means that laboratory training values experimentation and the testing of perceptions and new styles of behavior. In discussing the implementation of this value, Schein and Bennis point out that delegates are "prodded and rewarded by staff members to question old and try new behaviors (1965, p. 32)." In the Tavistock conference, such values are operative for some individuals (and some subgroup norms arise around these values), but these arise from individual learning goals as they are formed and altered by the members within the conference activities. In this regard, the conference makes room for more individual initiative; if the individual decides to experiment, he does it without the supportiveness of the consultant and often without peer aid. The consultant has accepted a task responsibility and authority that does not place the same discipline on members. In the theory of the conference, he can't sanction and reward members; learning must serve as its own reward. In practice, consultants attempt to avoid rewarding or sanctioning individuals despite members' attempts, particularly in the early days, to give the consultant an evaluative function.[18]

An area of major difference arises from laboratory training's value of conflict resolution through rational means. This orientation to conflict is based upon a problem-solving orientation as contrasted to other approaches based on bargains, power plays, repression, etc. An approach based on this value and strategy requires recognition of the conflict and its management and resolution through understanding its causes and consequences, and bringing to bear as much data as possible which are relevant to understanding the conflict. In this approach, resolution of conflict takes the form of consulting with all relevant individuals and groups and exploring, under conditions of trust, all possible alternatives for solution. This value and the approach growing out of it defines the general orientation of laboratory training toward interpersonal, organizational, and intergroup conflict.

In the case of the Tavistock conference, the focus is upon an examination of all conflicts generated within a well-defined organization (this does not mean completely defined but, rather, all given parameters being clearly delineated). This examination does not presume shared values and common goals growing out of these values which are the assumptions of laboratory training. The primary conflict examined is that which arises from dealing with a defined, legitimate authority based on expertise. This type of authority, which is common in a highly organized complex society, is simulated in its barest essentials in the conference so that the underlying processes of individual and group relationships to authority can be examined. Intergroup conflict is also examined. The conference orientation to these conflicts emphasizes examining conflicts that arise in these situations in order to identify projections that are occurring, their antecedents, and consequences.[19]

It is apparent that the conference and laboratory training have different orientations to training clients for conflict. In the case of laboratory training, the emphasis is on confronting conflict openly in a situation developing toward collaborative relationships, and learning a strategy of conflict resolution based on certain values. The primary emphasis of the conference is to study and cope, within the given structure, with conflict which arises out of a simulation of a classically defined bureaucratic (used here not in a pejorative sense) authority structure.[20] (The simulation of bureaucracy differs from the real thing in that it opens the door to full blown conflict or attempts to suppress it and permits study of the conflict by virtue of the undefined role of the delegate.) Also emphasized is conflict arising out of attempts to cope with undefined intergroup relations, formulation of groups in a turbulent environment, and face-to-face relations in a large group. These types of conflict can also be understood as simulating basic processes which occur within large bureaucracies as they operate in relationship to their environments.[21]

Current developments in experiential learning make it important to see the commonality of the laboratory and conference approaches to conflict. These current training efforts to which I refer are attempting to teach an understanding of conflict and skills for coping with conflict in areas of intense societal conflict. Both approaches have in common the fact that they are limited (albeit in different ways) with respect to examining a full range of power relationships and a full range of strategies for responding to conflict. The many important dimensions of power relationships as they relate to conflict are bases of power, degrees of established power patterns, degrees and types of slack resources, different degrees of goal consensus, etc. There also exist many strategies for conflict resolution which range from the area of

interpersonal skills to social structural designs. A full treatment of conflict demands working on as many of these dimensions of variance as possible. A limited treatment, to be at all valuable and not misleading, must include learning about the circumscribed nature of the phenomena being considered and the limited appropriateness of the strategy which is taught or allowed to develop. Neither the laboratory nor the conference provide learnings concerning the limited treatment of conflict which they provide. Neither one is explicit with regard to their selective assumptions with regard to conflict.

A second commonality of these two approaches to conflict can be seen by placing them in the context of a theoretical understanding of power. Gamson (1968) distinguishes between two perspectives on the power relationship (i.e., the relationship between authorities and potential partisans). A perspective on this relationship from the vantage point of the authorities is termed the social control perspective. This perspective emphasizes the processes by which collective goals are achieved, the legitimacy of the authorities is maintained, and compliance with their decisions is attained. The second perspective on the power relationship is the influence perspective. Here the focus of attention is the clash of competing interests, the existence of discontent, the mobilization of resources for political support, and the achievement of structural change. This perspective focuses on the power of actors in the system and not the maintenance of the system as a whole.

Current developments in experiential learning are increasingly focusing on conflict from the vantage point of an influence perspective.[22] In these applications, the questions of conflicting interests and lack of consensus, altered decision-making structures (redistribution of power), bargaining, etc. are phenomena of primary concern.

Both the laboratory training and the conference approaches to conflict are based on the social control perspective. Laboratory training focuses on resolving conflict through arriving at consensus about collective goals and achieving them through rational problem-solving behavior. The focus on conflict in the conference occurs within an unalterable authority structure. The study of conflict in the conference takes the form of coming to understand the potential partisans' and authorities' projective distortions and their antecedents, as well as consequences in this given structure.

In the conference I attended, the conference management was confronted by the members on the issue of altering the power structure to include member participation in decision-making. This arose out of specific learning issues, ideological commitments, and contemporary events occurring outside of the conference.[23] The membership, in the context of the second intergroup exercise, confronted management and attempted to bargain with them on this issue. The conference management took the position that this action was outside the established structures of the conference and would, given the design of this structure, operate to the detriment of learning about relations to authority in the way in which the conference staff considered central. This resulted in part of the membership establishing a parallel conference for a day and a half.

One of the values of science which, according to Schein and Bennis, serves to guide laboratory training is a value on authenticity in interpersonal relations. In line with this value, individuals and staff are encouraged to be themselves and to communicate inwardly with themselves and outwardly with others as freely as possible. In the context of the conference,

some individuals do experience more authentic relationships but this is not a primary goal of the conference. The conference stresses an increased facility to accomplish tasks as a result of experiencing and understanding the underlying processes (exposed when traditional structures are simulated in order to focus on the here and now). Freeness to be oneself and to communicate openly is facilitative of this learning about underlying processes but does not necessarily facilitate everyday task accomplishment. In fact, such a focus often advances liking and closeness in ways which may work to the detriment of task achievement.

Implementation of the Two Types of Training

Implementation of laboratory training and the Tavistock conference is based upon the definition of the respective events referred to earlier. This section will include treatment of the different approaches of the two events to specification of the essential conditions of training and learning. Since a key aspect of implementation of any training design is the roles of the staff members who conduct the training, differences in the roles of laboratory trainer and conference consultant will be described.

Both types of training have designed events for generating a behavioral output to be used for analysis and learning, but each has unique orientations with respect to this behavioral output. Laboratory training considers it essential that this output take place under conditions conducive to testing patterns of individual behavior that may need improvement or change. There are several components to these conditions; chief among them is a climate of permissiveness and inquiry. The central means by which this climate

is established is the creation of group norms on the basis of trainer modeling. The trainer models or encourages among members an attitude of inquiry to prevent patterns of moralizing or squelching of deviant members and to facilitate the openness and acceptance necessary for individual change. This modeling includes offering or seeking feedback and accepting it in order to establish further trust among the members. Therefore, in laboratory training the phenomena generated must include the development of group norms in part arising from trainer action, otherwise it does not serve the learning purposes of the laboratory.

The Tavistock conference also has events to generate a behavioral output for study.

> ...the basic conference method is to construct situations in which conventional defenses against recognizing or acting on interpersonal and intergroup hostilities and rivalries are either removed or at least reduced. This permits examination of the forces at work. The method consists therefore of lowering barriers to the expression of feeling both friendly and hostile; of providing opportunities for a continuous check on one's own feelings, and for comparing them with those of others, about given situations. Or, to put it another way, it is to check fantasy against reality. It means that the anxiety of learning is enhanced, and that therefore the ways in which anxiety is generated and controlled become part of the learning opportunity (Rice, 1965, pp. 26-27).

The conference also has a particular orientation to this output. Basic to much of the learning in the conference is learning about the anxiety of making decisions under the conditions described in the above quote. The technical problem for the conference is to provide situations that provoke anxiety about behavior and decision-making and allow the members to learn as much as they want to learn at the rate they want to learn it. The conference answer

to this question is its institutional framework which includes its program of events, the roles taken by the staff, and the conference setting. In short, in establishing its orientation to the generated behavioral output, the conference relies on organizational structure which is put into place by the staff on the basis of their authority. This authority is delegated to them through the director by the board of directors of the conference. They are also given the authority to recruit members for this 'organization,' i.e., the conference. One aspect of the organizational structure is an explicitly defined and strongly articulated task for each event. Another aspect is defined consultant role behavior (which, seen from the vantage point of an influence relationship, is based primarily on legitimate and expert power). A further aspect is the explicitly defined authority structure (which also defines staff responsibility) of the conference.

In contrast to this overt reliance on organizational structure, laboratory training establishes its orientation to the generated behavioral output by relying on trainer modeling to establish group norms.[24] From the perspective of an influence relationship, the trainer's base of power is largely referent and, to a lesser degree, expert. This difference between the two types of training leads to major differences between trainer and consultant roles. This difference will be further developed later in this section.

This difference with respect to orientation toward the generated behavior can be put into a broader framework. I do this in order to indicate both its wider antecedents as well as some of its implications. The work on organizational change includes several strategies (based on the point of intervention, organizational unit to be worked with, technology to be employed, etc.). Historically, two of the many strategies employed have involved either

establishing and/or altering the peer group processes, or analyzing, designing, and operationalizing socio-technical systems. The contrasting orientations of these two strategies are precisely what I have just pointed out in the comparison of these two training events. If one thinks this tie-in far fetched, it is only to be noted that laboratory training and some of its prominent practitioners have been dominant in the former strategy of organizational change, and that Tavistock Institute and, in particular, A. K. Rice have dominated the latter approach to organizational change. In fact, the comparison of these two types of training is very informative with respect to how these two orientations to organizational change specify what sort of training for organizational members is essential to supporting their respective change strategies. It is also possible to relate these two types of training to the requisites specified by the normative emphases of various organizational theories. In particular, it does not take much extrapolation to relate these types of training to Shepard's (1965), Likert's (1961) and Rice's (1967) theories of organization.

To carry one step further the connection of the conference to the theoretical and practical work done from the socio-technical system perspective, it is possible to show how particular descriptions of the conference can be understood in terms of this perspective. One description of the conference is as follows:

> ...the absence of structure save for that of the staff, forces members either to set up an 'organization' for themselves or to abandon the task. It is in the attempt to set up 'organizations' and in the taking of roles in them that members have the opportunity to experience from themselves the forces that are brought to bear on them when they take roles requiring leadership, and the forces they bring to bear on others who demand their following (Rice, 1965, p. 25).

One way of conceptualizing what is described here is to think of the delegates as faced with a problem of creating a socio-technical system. The conference staff in its design of the conference organization (boundaries, authority structure, etc.) formulation of primary tasks cast in terms of events, definition of specified staff roles, and recruitment of membership have provided the key parameters of a socio-technical system. The operating technology itself is the staff members in their defined roles carrying out the designed tasks of studying particular behavioral phenomena. Here the notion of technology is that of software, as contrasted to the more popular notion based on hardware. In this situation the members have the problem of organizing the socio-technical system within the given limits to utilize this technology to produce member learning. There are sub-problems of developing and shifting socio-emotional alliances, different variances in the technology itself, impingements from the environment, etc.

To further show how structure is employed to define and operationalize the conference orientation to the generated behavioral output, it is necessary to describe the major features of this structure as viewed from the perspective of the conference tradition. The use of the structure in establishing the major conference boundaries is as follows:

> The staff design the program and set a pattern of behavior, and by the program and their own behavior create an institution that gives protection to the members to experiment. In effect, four main 'boundary controls' are imposed: the total conference institution--visitors are admitted only under very special conditions, and no reports are ever made on individual members; the events--the primary task of each is defined, and one event is not allowed to overlap any other; staff roles--staff stay 'in role' and do not carry one into another; and time--events start and stop on time so that members know for how long the study of behavior will last, and for how long staff will maintain particular roles (Rice, 1965, p. 25).

The one major element of boundary control needing further treatment is that of staff roles. This will be dealt with when we compare trainer and consultant roles.

One very apparent outgrowth of the use of structural parameters to establish an orientation to the generated behavior is the behavior of members and staff in the informal periods of the conference (i.e., outside of the scheduled events and staff meetings). In these time segments of the conference, there is less continuation of the "work" that goes on in the groups. There is much more of a typical informal social character to this aspect of the conference culture than is the case in laboratory training. In laboratory training, time boundaries are not defined the same way nor as sharply. Also the staff roles are not defined the same way nor as distinctly in relationship to the membership.

There are other differences between the two types of training with respect to conditions they define as essential to training and learning. Laboratory training considers it essential that the staff work toward the development of collaborative relationships. Because of the attention I have already given to the contrast in values on this point between the two events, I will reiterate only one point in this regard. From the point of view of the conference, any staff initiative to set up consultative machinery would convey that usefulness of this procedure for solving problems of interpersonal and intergroup relations need not be questioned. Needless to say, from the perspective of the conference this assumption does need questioning. At any rate, the essential thing for the conference is that the member initiative, or lack of it in such a direction, should be studied.

Laboratory training considers it essential for learning that adequate models for data collection and study be presented. The consultants in the conference groups demonstrate an ability to do this and in this sense provide such a model. Beyond this, the conference does not go to the lengths that laboratory training does to provide such models and help people acquire skills in using them. This is connected to another essential learning condition of laboratory training which has no conference parallel. The laboratory considers it essential that the member have an opportunity to consider the self as change agent. This is not an explicit emphasis of the conference, although particular individuals in reflecting on their role in different conference situations surely see themselves from such a perspective. Since I have commented elsewhere on the differences with respect to cognitive inputs, I will not give further treatment to this necessary condition (from the laboratory perspective) of learning and training.

Comparison of the Roles of Trainer and Consultant

I will conclude this section by comparing the roles of trainer and consultant. The most impressive difference between these roles is in their definition of relationship to the members of the training events. A characterization which may give a feeling for this difference is that the trainer-member relationship resembles a peer relationship and the consultant-member relationship resembles the more traditional authoritarian relationship of teacher and student. Both role definitions are built around the staff member's expertise as a resource for learning. As a result of differing values and goals, the ways that are attempted in the two events to bring about the utilization of this resource are different.

Laboratory training takes the avenue of developing collaborative relationships between the trainer and group (or activity) members and, on the basis of this model, between members. This is intended to bring about the laboratory goal of increased, individual, interpersonal competence. The accent is on trust, flexibility, openness, informality, and a climate of "let us see each other's resources; let us use them via joint decision-making and goal setting; let us help each other be more effective group members; and let us not get sidetracked by authority or status which will get in the way of fully using our resources openly, and which will not allow us the fullest possible satisfaction." This way of using expertise is offered as being essential for learning in the laboratory and as a pattern to be emulated outside of the laboratory.

The conference takes the avenue of building task-oriented organizational roles as its means of choice for achieving the goal of conference learning, increased understanding of organizational phenomena (authority relations, leadership and followership, and boundary definition and transaction). In the conference approach the accent is on clarity, consistency, openness, and formality (i.e., maintaining the role definition); and a climate of "consultants and members are different; let us see the differences clearly; let us understand how the group operates in light of the prevailing understanding of the difference and other factors; let us work hard to use all the resources in this group to further our learning about what is going on in this group." This way of utilizing expertise is held to be essential for conference learning but not necessarily appropriate for all situations outside of the conference.

What are the implications of these two different ways of utilizing expertise? The key question in this regard is the effectiveness of experts operating in these roles in bringing about the learning goals of the respective

events. This is a question that needs to be answered by further research; however, as many researchers have pointed out, it is an exceedingly difficult question to answer. Part of the quite considerable volume of research on laboratory training attempts to deal with this question. Reviews and bibliographies of this research have been made by Stock (1965), Harrison (1967), etc. It goes beyond the task of this report to discuss this research at length. Suffice it to say that trainers operating in the laboratory setting do effect some changes of the type desired in members' behavior. Some of the best (re: canons of research) recent research work which shows such positive results has been done by Miles (1960) and Bunker (1963). From what I have been able to learn, no comparable research has been done on the conference.[25]

Aside from the key question of the effectiveness of these two roles, there are other implications of the differing roles of trainer and consultant which should be described in order to enhance a comparative picture. For laboratory training, one implication is the problem of multiple roles for the trainer and potential conflicts which may arise from member confusion about these roles. This comes about in the face of the fact that, as far as the design and implementation of this learning event, he is more than just a collaborator. One implication of this "more than" is the power that goes with his position in planning and implementation and the legitimacy of his designation as trainer. At the same time that this is descriptive of the situation, an attempt is being made by the staff to become more truly collaborative with the members. The confusion is highlighted in the attempt to avoid dependency and counter dependency and to allow the member to exercise full control over himself. Bradford, Benne and Lippitt point to the basic factors in this situation in the following way:

> In an effective laboratory, the staff member utilizes a variety of roles in facilitating learning. He functions alternatively as a participant, encourager, or reality tester, and as observer and interpreter of group and individual behavior. He may find it desirable to serve from time to time as consultant and as counselor. He usually finds it necessary to supply concepts and knowledge needed to analyze experiential situations.
>
> These various functions may at times be in conflict in his own mind as well as in the minds of participants. The laboratory design must provide opportunity for the trainer to work through problems emerging in his relationships with learners. Staff designing should also include time for each staff member to consider, singly and with other staff members, the variety of functions he may be required to fulfill, the impact of his personal needs, personality characteristics, and trainer style, and ways by which he may better assist the group to develop a collaborative relationship with him and to cope effectively with his behavior (1965, pp. 47-48).

Laboratory training considers it possible to work through the problems arising from this multiple role situation and its attendant conflict. As has already been implied, the proponents consider this role definition as compatible with laboratory values and well suited for achieving the kind of learning they have as their goal.

What are the implications of the particular consultant role which the conference has developed? On one hand, the clearly defined role can be a helpful support to the consultant in sticking to his task and in evaluating this task. On the other hand, it can provide the consultant with protection that permits him to distance himself from both group phenomena and group members and, therefore, not use fully his feelings in his work and not facilitate full inquiry into his own role and behavior in the group. The danger inherent in this role is the potential of an automaton dispensing mechanized theoretical knowledge at a distance from the basic processes that are occurring. I suspect that the reader of this report (given any degree of

subscription to the value and tone of collaboration and/or rejection of the virtues of rational bureaucratic organization) might be prone to see this danger as inevitable and following naturally from this role as it is seen from the reader's vantage point. From my experience and observations, this problem was not major but did apply to a few consultants. Rice's comment is informative as to how the architect of this role envisions its operation:

> A member of the staff, acting as a consultant in any conference event, has his own conceptual framework within which he observes the behavior in front of him, including his own. He also has his 'knowledge-of-acquaintance' from his own 'learning experience.' But when he is at work as a consultant he is a person who, in Rickman's words, 'At the moment of his most creative endeavors, lets these disciplines sink into the background of his consciousness and senses the direction of a process or the degree of freedom in the organization of persons seeking his advice.' In other words, he uses his own feelings to sense what is happening. He cannot observe with a detached objectivity that relieves him of the responsibility of taking account of what he is feeling himself. If he finds himself becoming embarrassed, anxious, angry, hurt, or pleased, he can ask himself why he is feeling, and can attempt to sort out what comes from within himself and what is being projected onto him by conference members. So far as he is sure that some of the feeling is being projected onto him and is not the result of some idiosyncrasy of his own personality, he can use himself as a measuring instrument--however rough and ready--to give him information about the meaning of behavior, both consciously and unconsciously motivated. If he can then find an explanation of the projection in terms of the specific task set for that event he can make an 'interpretation about the behavior of those present, including himself.' The interpretation may be accepted, rejected, or ignored--but whichever it is, consultant and members are then faced by another piece of behavior related to his intervention (1965, p. 26).

Rice further points out that the consultant's behavior is as important for learning as his words.

A further implication of the conference consultant's role, which offers some contrast to the laboratory trainer, is the way that it is designed into

the conference organization. The main point of contrast revolves around the role of the director in the different phases of conference operation (planning, preconference administration, and conference operation). The model of activity in the planning phase is that of a group of colleagues with a chairman. In the actual operation of the conference, there are always contingencies and the staff cannot always act as a group with the speed and decisiveness needed. The staff members also lose some perspective on the whole conference because of their deep involvement in their own groups. To meet this situation, there is the role of director who has the authority and carries the responsibility to act in what he believes to be the best interests of the members irrespective of previous decisions and roles. By contrast, the office of dean of a laboratory more closely follows the model of a chairman among colleagues throughout the planning and operation of the laboratory. Also, the dean generally functions as trainer of one of the T-groups, while the chairmen of the conference does not have study group responsibilities.

Relationship Between Training and Therapy

How are the two types of training to be understood in their relationship to group therapy? This is a difficult question which at its most basic level involves definitions of group therapy, detailed analyses of the trainer and consultant roles, and the interventions made by these group leaders. In the context of this report it is impossible to treat in depth these important attendant issues. At the same time, because of the importance of the relation of training to therapy, it is necessary to make some general comments on this issue.

In comparing the two types of training with respect to this issue, an understanding of the history of their development is helpful. Laboratory training did not have its origins in group therapy while the Tavistock conference did. Rice (1965), in tracing the history of development of the Tavistock conference, points out that this tradition arose from a particular type of group therapy. This form of group therapy takes as its approach the focus of attention on the group. Individual behavior of group members is seen no as a product of individual psychological makeup, but rather as a manifestation of a group process. This is to be distinguished from group therapy in which the focus of attention is on the individual and the individual's relationship to the group as the group provides the background for the individual. It has been understood that the conferences in the Tavistock tradition are distinct from group therapy although the staff has been aware, in practice, of the inevitable haziness of this distinction. The majority of conference consultants (particularly in the United States) are clinicians and psychiatrists.

In the course of its history, laboratory training has developed particular designs and some general patterns which have moved it much closer to group therapy. The model of group therapy with which it has affinity is that type in which the individual is the focus with the group in background. The majority of staff members in laboratory training events are not clinicians or psychiatrists.

Rice (1965, pp. 155-156) recognizes that training during the conferences can in some ways be seen on a continuum with psychotherapy. The judgment of similarity arises in his eyes because of the similarity between the study groups and therapeutic groups (with regard to size and techniques). This judgment, as he points out, overlooks the important distinction of the vastly differing

institutions in which these groups operate. The study group is a group of students "taken" by a consultant in an educational institution. The responsibility of the consultant, his authority, and the sanctions under which he operates are different than in therapy groups. These aspects of the consultant's role all stem from the primary task of the conference to provide opportunities for members to learn about leadership and membership in different group settings within a carefully defined overall organization. The conference as an institution understands its members to be mature adults who qualify for conference membership by holding jobs involving leadership and management.

While emphasizing a distinction based on institutional differences, Rice does not dodge the fact that this learning opportunity involves psychological stress which implies risk. There is the possibility that some members and staff will be unable to tolerate this stress. He emphasizes staff responsibility for individual problems that arise. At the same time, he points out that dealing with problems of breakdown and withdrawals is one of the tasks of leadership in general and an appropriate conference learning task as well.

In describing laboratory training in general, Schein and Bennis (1965, p. 4) state that it contains elements of both education and therapy but, at the same time, maintains its distinctiveness from therapy. As one confronts the heterogeneity of types of laboratory training it becomes clear that some types more than others can be seen as distinct from therapy. Jerome Frank (1964), a practicing group therapist, has systematically contrasted group therapy to a T-group in a general human relations laboratory. He differentiates the T-group from the therapy group in terms of its membership, its goals, the type of attitudes it attempts to modify, the role and functioning of the leaders,

and the mode of operation of the group. In the T-group there are limits to the content which is grist for the mill. Motivations are pursued only as they relate to overt behavior, and the focus is not on individuals but on the group. Individuals' comments are examined for the light they shed on group process and not for what they indicate about the individual. Further, Frank points out that the trainer typically intervenes with respect to the group (e.g., may describe attitudes toward the trainer without identifying the members involved). He does document similarities between the T-group and group therapy but emphasizes the differences.

Other laboratories, still within the general human relations framework, give less clear evidence in their T-groups of maintaining such a distinctiveness with respect to therapy. In these groups, there are not the distinctions with respect to the role and functioning of the trainer and fewer, if any, restrictions on the content. The focus is on individuals, and overt behavior is used to elucidate underlying motivations. The T-groups which I have personally experienced extend in orientation from a focus on individual motivations within limits (not going into sexual conflicts; avoiding lengthy, intense periods of focus on any one individual; etc.) to T-groups in which Gestalt therapy, with its intense focus on acting out and resolving individual motivational conflicts, is a dominant aspect of group activity.

The small groups of the conference are similar in some important ways to the T-group described by Frank in which the distinctiveness from group therapy was maintained. Most importantly, in the conference's small groups the focus is not on individuals but on the group (what the group is doing

with respect to the phenomenon of focus at the time). This emphasis in the conference on small groups even goes beyond that of the T-group analyzed by Frank. Another important similarity is in the way the consultant intervenes with respect to the group and not with respect to individuals. The conference small groups are not similar to the T-groups, whose mode of operation Frank describes toward individually-oriented group therapy.

With regard to the relationship between training and therapy, it is important to look further at trends over time. Bradford, Benne, and Gibb trace what they see as key changes that have occurred over the seventeen years from the beginning of T-groups to their particular article about them. They state:

> One change is a deeper vision of the problems of individuals confronted by demands for change and adaptation which threaten their needs for autonomous growth as persons.... The re-educative task has deeper therapeutic dimensions than the founders of the laboratory realized... (1964, pp. 6-7).

They state that the heightening of this dimension has occurred through the self selection of learning emphases by the participants, the involvement of more clinically oriented professionals in the training network, and the studies of social and organizational life which have focused on individuals questing for identity in a fragmented society. Roger Harrison more recently has documented this same trend:

> Among practitioners there appears to be a historical trend from a normative approach focused on the development of democratic ideology in the democratic decision-making group to a concern with individual growth as the desired outcome. The individual growth position with respect to outcome would probably focus on the receiving of feedback in the T-group as the basic learning process in laboratory training. The process begins when the individual exposes his characteristic styles of relating to others in the T-group and receives feedback about the reactions of others to his behavior (1967, p. 5).

Recently, Argyris (1967) pointed out potential problems in this course of development and sounded certain cautions. This continues to be an issue of debate in laboratory training and a source of regional differences in the NTL network.

The basic relationship of the conference to group therapy has been more stable over time. In this regard, it must be noted that the volume of training done in the conferences is much smaller than that done in laboratories. Also, it has continued to be the case that the majority of consultants are psychiatrists or clinical psychologists. The trend over time of the conference to add activities in addition to the basic small group activity which was the initial focus indicates a further movement away from an individual focus (with its inevitably closer, hazy relation to therapy) toward an increased emphasis on a variety of organizational phenomenon.

In summary, the two types of training have a different historic relationship to therapy. As an outgrowth of this history, the staffs involved in this training have different associations with the mental health professions. The two types of training tend to juxtapose themselves to two quite distinct types of group therapy. One more than the other relies on the institutional framework and roles of the training event and techniques stemming from it to define its boundary with respect to therapy. The two types of training appear to some extent to be moving in opposite directions in their relationship to group therapy. Perhaps most importantly, the two types of training encourage different degrees of heterogeneity in the ways particular events may relate to therapy.

Research on and Dissemination of Training

In regard to research on training and dissemination of training experiences, there are clear differences between the two types of programs. As I pointed out in an earlier section, laboratory training practitioners and advocates have encouraged quite a bit of research on the procedures and outcomes of laboratory training. Laboratory training has justified such research as an extension of the emphasis on an attitude of inquiry which includes the elements of objectivity and hypothesis testing. The difficulty of research in this area and the scarcity of finances for such projects have resulted in a far smaller volume of research relative to practice than is desirable for a full validation of the effectiveness of the training being done. Nonetheless, this research currently is being done on a larger scale and there is better dissemination of results.

Virtually no published evaluation research has been done on the conference and much less is written about the conference than about laboratory training. The difference with respect to the amount written must be attributed largely to the difference in the scale of operation between the two training events. The difference with respect to research can't be attributed fully to this cause. In a recent discussion at the conference, A.K. Rice expressed the opinion that the conference needed to be well established before evaluation research is undertaken. His statement was to the effect that you can't plant something and keep pulling it up by the roots to see how it is doing. Certainly, the point can be made that good evaluation research in a learning event like the conference is a massive undertaking of considerable cost

(both in terms of money and available personnel) and that its implementation of necessity causes certain interferences in conference operation.

Another factor contributing to this lack of high priority for conference evaluation research can be detected in the conference climate. The orientation to social science that pervaded the conference was more that of the case study than that of quantitative empirical study. At the same time, I had less the feeling in the conference setting of a cult phenomenon or a movement than I had in the laboratory training setting of Bethel. This may have more to do with the differing emphasis between the two events on the promotion of particular values (such promotion being basic to laboratory training). It is a debatable question, given our current sophistication in evaluation research, whether or not evaluation is furthered more by highly empirical research carried on tangential to the training, or by training carried out in a noncultish, critical, and scrutinizing climate. A case can be made that utilizable evaluation (utilizable in terms of exercising an effect on the practice of training) is furthered more by the latter situation than by the former.

The attitude toward dissemination held by the two types of training is quite different. Laboratory training values dissemination very highly as evidenced by the development of its trainer of trainer programs, its consultations, and the heterogeneity of the National Training Laboratory's organization. The conference is dominated by an attitude of slow, controlled dissemination in the interest of being able to allow a relatively small group of individuals to work on the homogeneous development and refinement of the conference operation in a systematic way.

This leads to a further contrast between the conference and the laboratory with respect to their approach to developing the training. In laboratory training a high priority is put on experimentation and innovation with respect to laboratory design. This priority prevails to such a degree that there is virtually never the replication of a complete laboratory design. It is the norm to vary more elements of a design from laboratory to laboratory than are held constant. By contrast, the conference is conservative with respect to design innovation. A primary emphasis is placed on the necessity of repeating the design with different populations to become as fully familiar as possible in a given design with what occurs and how to handle the opportunities presented for learning. This is not to say that there have not been significant innovations in conference design; obviously, there have been such innovations. One of the primary values of the documentation provided by Rice's book (1965) is a description of some of these changes and what brought them about.

Problems and Resources Stimulating the Development of Training

The two types of training in their origin sought to speak to different social conditions. This different orientation to social conditions extends into the present although, due to development and flux, it is impossible to find as striking a contrast in their contemporary implementation.

Laboratory training began in the area of adult education on the basis of a perception that certain learning needs of individuals were being inadequately met and, in this condition, certain cherished values were being threatened by historical events (Bradford, Gibb, and Benne, 1965, pp. 4-5). The founders of this form of training detected that individuals were being compelled to change

by pressure from the natural sciences and related technologies. In the founders' eyes, individuals were unprepared to work out adaptations to these changes with sensitivity and effectiveness in terms of themselves and their relationships. Both the individual and social structure were involved in this situation and the small group laboratory training event was seen as an avenue to individual rehabilitation and a means to prepare for reconstruction of the social environment. The laboratory's diagnosis as to the root causes of the conditions which it intended to alleviate was that these conditions arose out of a separation of action, research, and education.

In contrast to laboratory training, the conference grew out of a more general and, at the same time, more circumscribed concern. It was assumed that of central importance, particularly to those in leadership positions, is the experience of learning how to work more effectively with others as individuals and as members of groups. It was felt that this is particularly useful to managers, administrators, and professional workers. Rice refers to this concern with respect to these individuals:

> ... as a minimum they have to come to terms with themselves, and with personal and group characteristics of those who man the institutions in which they work. To be successful they have to make constructive use of their own personalities (1965, p. 7).

So the concern of the conference is with the effectiveness of individuals in given institutional and organizational roles.

Certainly a major factor triggering this concern about the individual's organizational effectiveness was a realization that there existed an unutilized body of knowledge involving an understanding of the behavior of individuals and groups. Laboratory training also saw that there were unutilized resources which could be employed to meet the problems its founders perceived.

The particular spheres of unutilized knowledge and resources which the two types of training sought to employ were different. A cursory look at these resources helps to understand further the difference between these two types of training. Laboratory training drew on three areas for its resources: social science, philosophy, and developments in social practice. The social science input was dominated by Lewinian social psychology and the related specialization of group dynamics and action research. This input was, at the time, an element in the mainstream of American academic psychology which contained research and theoretical orientations as well as a concern for social change. The developments from social practice included innovations in group therapy (Moreno), as well as leadership training carried out by organizations. The philosophical input was dominated by the orientation of John Dewey's followers.

As I pointed out in an earlier section, one of the resources on which the conference drew was group therapy done in the tradition of Bion, and the development of this tradition in Britain by Tavistock Institute. Another, not unrelated, resource that has been very influential in the conference is organizational psychology and conceptualizations about socio-technical change that have been done at Tavistock. Two things about this work are important: (1) in the past, there has been a tight link between organizational change and psychotherapy as is manifest in the works of Jaques, Rice, and others; (2) much of the Tavistock organizational experience grows out of consultation contracts and relies more heavily on case work and descriptive materials than do many comparable efforts in the United States. This approach is evident in the work of Burns and Stalker (1961) and Miller and Rice (1964). From this brief treatment,

it can be seen that the two training events in some respects drew on different resource areas and where they drew on common areas, they turned to differing traditions.

Certainly, a factor distinguishing the two types of training (at least in their origin and probably even currently) is that one had its origin in the United States and another in Great Britain. Currently, laboratory training is being done in Europe and conferences are operating in the United States; presumably, they are being adapted to these new settings. Nonetheless, a comparison of norms (e.g., on social change, personal involvement in organizations, etc.) and problems (e.g., fragmentation and alienation in pluralistic society, organizational effectiveness in a highly socialistic society, etc.) could provide a further understanding of the differences between the two traditions of training. It is both beyond the scope of this report and the capabilities of this author to pursue further this area of differentiation.

Conclusion

It has been shown that laboratory training and the Tavistock conference, two types of experiential learning, contrast and differ in important ways. They are designed to respond to different societal issues and make different types of responses to these issues. The two types of training define themselves differently, assume different models of the learner and the learning process, attempt to accomplish somewhat different goals, and employ somewhat different technologies to achieve their goals. The state of research on the two forms of training is different, as is their orientation toward dissemination of the training.

At the same time, laboratory training and the conference have in common the attempt to provide the learner direct opportunities for learning from his experience. Both forms of training utilize trainers to guide the learning process. Similarities to group therapy are present in both forms of training.

Throughout this comparison, problematic issues with respect to both types of training have been raised. It should be clear that both types have advantages and disadvantages and that the range of possible approaches to training based on experiential learning have been far from exhausted by even these two types. It is hoped that the reader has been helped in making a more informed judgment as to the theoretical and practical relevance and validity of the two types of training. Most of all, it is hoped that as a result of this report those people designing, conducting, and researching training events will be stimulated to conceptualize further what they do and to evaluate it more critically.

NOTES

1. A brief description built on a documentation of the Group Relations Conference was developed because of the untamiliarity of American social scientists with this form of training. A more detailed, but somewhat dated (relative to recent developments) description of the Group Relations Conference is available in A.K. Rice's book, Learning for Leadership, 1965.

2. The Human Relations Laboratory as developed by National Training Laboratories is described in Bradford's (ed., 1964) T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method and Schein and Bennis' (1965) Personal and Organizational Change Through Group Methods.

3. The theory and practice employed in these groups was developed by the psychoanalyst W.R. Bion. A theoretical statement of his approach to groups is contained in Experiences in Groups (1961).

4. The author was a participant in the June, 1968 conference held at Mount Holyoke College, Holyoke, Mass.

5. This plenipotentiary role provided the consultant with freedom to do what he could in the conditions encountered in the group. This freedom was to be exercised within the primary task of the management group.

6. The particular NTL laboratory training event most comparable to the Tavistock Group Relations Conference is the Human Relations Laboratory (considered to be the basic general offering in NTL's summer program).

7. It is recognized that a reader's own orientation to such training programs and their assumptions will provide a perspective from which my efforts can be critiqued. At the same time, readers should be cautious concerning their own unexamined preferences in this area.

8. In the context in which we are using the category, it is meant to apply to possible goals at a stranger learning event. Schein and Bennis (1965) have most often applied it to laboratories with different type populations (stranger, family groups, etc.).

9. NTL sponsors personal growth laboratories which also share this focus, as well as common techniques and staff.

10. The differences which become apparent in the opening session are further delineated in the contrasting roles assumed by laboratory trainer and conference consultant in the next session of the two types of training. This contrast will be treated later in this report.

11. The giving and receiving of personal feedback did occur in the conference. Participants seemed to engage in such interaction in response to the emotional intensity that they were experiencing. Such feedback often did not meet the criterion which laboratory training specifies as necessary in order that feedback contribute to personal relearning.

12. One implication of the difference in heterogeneity is that the participants in the conference I attended knew more about what conference activities to expect. They had learned this information from participants at previous conferences. Participants in the laboratory I attended did not have the same degree of knowledge as to the exact activities in which they would participate.

13. It was my impression that there was more resistance to the experiential learning of the laboratory than of the conference. While this might have been due merely to differences in the participant populations, it could also have resulted from the explicitness of the laboratory's philosophy of learning.

14. The differences in these statements of value should lead to the events attracting differing types of individuals. My attendance at only one event of each type did not provide me with adequate information on this issue.

15. By the same token, from the perspective of laboratory training the values of the conference are quite limited and do not lead to learnings in many areas considered essential by laboratory training.

16. I am indebted to Margaret Rioch, a past staff member of the conference and the current director, for reading and commenting on this report. She has made an important comment on my treatment of the issue of "collaboration." She states: "I think that the conference method is one of collaboration between staff and members, with the difference from laboratory training being that we think of collaboration as between people who have differentiated roles who by this very differentiation come to a significant kind of collaboration; whereas in laboratory training the collaboration seemed to me to be a kind of homogenization of role (Rioch, 1968)."

17. Participants in both types of training formed informal relationships with staff members. In so far as I could observe, these relationships did not seem markedly different except for the fact that the availability of conference staff of the conference activities seemed to be more structural and perhaps purposeful. For instance, on certain evenings during unscheduled time the conference staff as a whole socialized with participants.

18. I found that participants in the conference seemed to differentiate the role of staff and participants to a greater extent than did participants in the laboratory. Participants in the laboratory seemed to more frequently think of the staff as learners as well as participants.

19. The staff refuses to participate in any action that violates or attempts to change the defined organization of the conference including the defined authority. This stance by the staff arises out of their commitment to the defined tasks of the conference and the organization established to facilitate the realization of these tasks.

20. In this context, Margaret Rioch (1968) has pointed out as a difference the fact that in laboratory training there is an assumption that conflict will be resolved if people are open, and in the conferences this assumption is not made.

21. In the laboratory experience I felt removed from the world of large-scale organizations. The culture of the laboratory had a component which was anti large-scale bureaucracies. In the conference, I felt myself to be within an organization which was not totally dissimilar from the large-scale organization of every-day life.

22. Examples of these developments include the project on high school crisis carried out within the Center for Research on the Utilization of Scientific Knowledge (Chesler, et. al., 1969) and the work on a national clearinghouse on crisis, conflict, and change in secondary schools being conducted by the Educational Change Team of the University of Michigan (Chesler and Guskin, 1970).

23. These commitments concerned the morality and learning utility of members participating in the control of the educational organizations of which they are a part.

24. The laboratory also is organized, but the total organization of the laboratory is not explicitly designed with members' learnings in mind.

25. In a later section, I will describe the attitude of these two events toward research.

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